

May 12, 2003

I. CALL TO ORDER

Chairman Rossetti called a Long Range Planning Committee of the Whole Meeting of the School Committee to order in the Cafeteria at the West Somerville Neighborhood School, at 7:05 p.m., to discuss 2003 Goals from School Committee, Early Childhood Focus Group reports, and Somerville Public Schools Plan for Implementing Question 2.

II. ROLL CALL

Present were Ms. Cardoso, Ms. Harris, Ms. Bauer, Mr. Sullivan (arrived 7:27 p.m.), Ms. Taylor, Ms. Murray and Ms. Rossetti.

Mayor Gay and Alderman O'Donovan were absent.

Also present were Dr. Albert F. Argenziano, Superintendent of Schools, Dr. Steven F. Jenkins, District Administrator for Student Services, Mr. Robert A. Snow, Assistant Superintendent for Curriculum, Instruction and Assessment, Ms. Sarah Slive Davila, Consultant, and approximately fifty members of the audience.

III. Early Childhood Focus Group Reports

Ms. Sarah Slive Davila gave a power point presentation of the Somerville Public Schools, *Early Childhood Focus Groups Report*, summary of March 2003. Ms. Slive Davila outlined the report, as follows:

Objectives

- To gather information regarding educational needs and priorities of prospective parents
- To meet with parents who are representative of the entire community
- To assist in long-range planning

Outreach strategies

- Utilize existing Early Childhood Networks
- Tap into Key Informant Group knowledge of the community
- Utilize existing parent forums
- Notice in *Somerville Journal*
- Conduct groups in the languages of the community

Participation

- Key informants represented 16 agencies
- 98 participants – parents of 185 preschool and school age children
- Home language representation: 43% Spanish, 30% English, 13% Portuguese, 10% Haitian Creole, 3% other language

III. Early Childhood Focus Group Reports (cont.)

Summary of Needs

- Teaching and Learning
- Support Services
- School Climate
- Parent Involvement

Development of K-8 Survey

- Organized around four themes that emerged in Early Childhood Focus Groups
- Respondents will rank by importance of education need or priority

Areas of Concern

- Perception v. reality
- Neighborhood schools v. educational choices and options
- Maintaining school climate that is free from discrimination

Recommendations

- Improve avenues for sharing of information
- Replication of “pockets” of excellence
- Ensure student safety
- Provide mechanisms for meaningful parent involvement
- Promote positive school climate

Also discussed was the K8 Parent/Guardian Survey on Educational Needs and Priorities. The four areas listed on the survey include: Teaching and Learning, Support Services, School Environment, and Parent Involvement. Ms. Slive Davila advised that the completed survey form is to be returned to the child’s classroom teacher by Friday, May 16, 2003.

Following the presentation, brief discussion took place. Ms. Slive Davila and Dr. Jenkins responded to questions and/or concerns of school committee members and members of the audience. Ms. Rossetti informed the community that continued discussion would take place at the time of the completed report of the K-8 survey. Ms. Rossetti thanked Ms. Slive Davila for her report this evening and also the community, for their input.

IV. Somerville Public Schools Plan for Implementing Question 2

Dr. Steven F. Jenkins, District Administrator for Student Services, gave a presentation on Somerville Public Schools Plan for Implementing Question 2. He discussed in detail, the following topics outlined in the twenty one page Question 2 Implementation Plan, as follows:

- I. Kindergarten
- II. Grades 1-8 Sheltered English Immersion Program
- III. Grades 1-8 Additional Services
- IV. Grades 9-12 Sheltered English Immersion Program Services
- V. Necessary considerations for 9-12 EL classes
- VI. Process
- VII. Intent of the Law

IV. Somerville Public Schools Plan for Implementing Question 2 (cont.)

- VIII. Program Design Options
- IX. Full Immersion (Kindergarten Only)
- X. Grades 1-8 Sheltered English Immersion Program (SEIP)
- XI. Grades 1-8 Sheltered English Immersion Program - Low Incidence Population
- XII. Grades 9-12 Sheltered English Immersion Program
- XIII. English Mainstream
- XIV. Alternative Bilingual Education Programs
- XV. Parental Exception Waivers
- XVI. Waiver Conditions and Authorizations – Students under 10 years of age (K-5)
- XVII. Waiver Conditions and Authorizations – Students over 10 years of age (6-12)
- XVIII. Somerville Public Schools – English Language Learners – Waiver Request Form / 2003-2004 School Year

Complete copies of the *Implementation of Question 2* document will be available (in all languages) at the Long Range Planning Committee Meeting to be held on Thursday, May 15, 2003 at 6:30 p.m., in the auditorium at the East Somerville Community School.

Following the presentation, Ms. Rossetti asked the audience for their input, and welcomed any questions. Lengthy discussion took place. Dr. Argenziano, Mr. Snow, and Dr. Jenkins answered questions that school committee members and audience members asked and addressed any concerns they had.

MOTION: Ms. Taylor made a motion, seconded by Ms. Cardoso, to accept the plan and implementation of Question 2 with the understanding that we will have an appropriate proactive method of having waivers available to parents, and accessibility of explanation of such, including some evening hours; and to exclude from Section V, on page 6, items A and B as follows: *A. All sheltered immersion classes will be considered Standard Courses for the purpose of computing GPA and B. Students enrolled in double-block English Literacy Skills classes will be entitled to enroll in a World Language course consistent with second language experiences, and will receive credit for this course in lieu of a Fine Arts requirement toward graduation, if necessary.*

The motion was approved by a roll call vote of Yes–7–Cardoso, Harris, Bauer, Sullivan, Taylor, Murray, and Rossetti; Absent –2–Gay and O'Donovan.

FRIENDLY AMENDMENT: Ms. Murray made a friendly amendment to add the words *pending funding* to the above motion.

Ms. Taylor did not accept the friendly amendment. To amend the motion was denied by voice vote.

Ms. Rossetti reported that items A and B on page 6, Section V (as stated above), will be referred to the next Rules Management Committee of the Whole Meeting. The meeting will take place on Thursday, May 15, 2003 at 6:15 p.m. in the auditorium at the East Somerville Community School.

V. Somerville School Committee / 2003-2004 Goals & Objectives

Dennis M. Sullivan, Ward I

- Keep the budget hurt away from students, maintain our low class sizes.

M. Teresa Cardoso, Ward II

- To make it through the FY04 budget cycle
- Complete plans on Lincoln Park Community School
- Reorganize the guidance department at Somerville High School

Roberta Bauer, Ward III

- To preserve options for students and families by keeping the small schools open

Charlene F. Harris, Ward IV

- To make it through the FY04 budget cycle
- Continue to work at improving the guidance department at Somerville High School
- To maintain our MCAS scores as they are now

Katrina K. Murray, Vice Chairman

- Formalize ways that volunteers can get involved in the schools
- Establish middle school model on paper

Carolyn Taylor, Ward VI

- Enhance resources by volunteer and selective appeals to preserve core programs of Somerville Public Schools
- Establish new math series with same level of professional development and classroom support as new reading program

Mary Jo Rossetti, Chairman

- Maintain and keep to our goal of maintaining low class size
- To maintain/improve on our MCAS results
- Improve the guidance department at Somerville High School

Sean T. O'Donovan, President of the BOA

Communication will be sent to Alderman O'Donovan asking for his input regarding goals and objectives for 2003-04.

Dorothy A. Kelly Gay, Mayor

Communication will be sent to Mayor Gay asking for her input regarding goals and objectives for 2003-04.

V. ADJOURNMENT

The meeting was adjourned at 9:40 p.m. by voice vote.

Dr. Albert F. Argenziano
Secretary